



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
Carlsbad Field Office
2730 Loker Avenue West
Carlsbad, California 92008

January 17, 1997

David H. Densmore
Division Administrator
U.S. Dept. Of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Region Nine
California Division
980 Ninth Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, California 95814-2724

Re: State Route 78/111 Brawley Bypass Environmental Impact Statement, Imperial County,
California (1-6-96-TA-33)

Dear Mr. Densmore:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) received a letter from your agency dated November 5, 1996, requesting that we be a cooperating agency for the referenced project. The Service understands that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation is initiating an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the referenced project and is asking the Service to express our views on subjects within our jurisdiction or expertise.

The project consists of constructing approximately 19.9 km of State Routes 78 and 111 in Imperial County, near the City of Brawley, from 0.8 km south of Baughman Road on State Routes 86 and 78 to 0.5 km north of Mead Road on State Route 111. The project is proposed as a four-lane expressway. Improvements to the corridor are considered necessary to provide the final link in continuous four-lane highway access between Interstate 8 in Imperial County and Interstate 10 in Riverside County. This project is part of the primary North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) corridor between the mainland of Mexico and the City of Los Angeles. These improvements are also considered necessary to relieve local congestion and highway safety concerns in the City of Brawley along existing State Route 78 and 111 which are currently burdened with extensive commercial traffic.

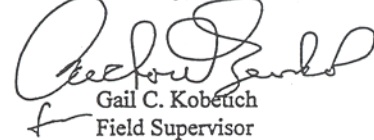
The Service accepts your invitation to coordinate on this project and looks forward to working closely with FHWA and the project applicant on several project components, including but not limited to: alignment variations if appropriate to minimize environmental effects, wetlands, floodway and floodplain, wildlife habitat, growth inducement, noise, land use planning, and

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Mr. David Densmore (1-6-96-TA-33)

hazardous waste. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the Service's roles and responsibilities during the preparation of this EIS, please contact my staff biologists, Beverlee Mare'chal for wildlife concerns, and Jeff Manning for wetland concerns at (619) 431-9440.

Sincerely,


Gail C. Kobeuch
Field Supervisor

**BRAWLEY
BYPASS**
SR-78/SR-111

Figure 6-3B